

North Avenue Review

Spring 1997

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[The North Avenue Review](#) is a student publication of the [Georgia Institute of Technology](#). It is published four times a year by [our staff](#) composed of people who write for us, submit art, help with layout, show up to meetings, etc. for the students of Georgia Tech. It has become a (relatively) long-standing tradition as an alternative form of expression.

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North Avenue Review

A Georgia Tech Publication.

Dear Advice Lady,

I need help! Serious help, okay? I am concerned about my future at this school. I don't know what I'm supposed to be doing here. Freshman year I started as a Chemistry major, for what reason I'm not sure seeing how I just don't get the whole atomic theory thing. I mean, what is an electron, really? Has anyone ever actually seen one? But anyway, last year I switched to Biology and I hate that even more. We had to dissect a fetal pig in lab one day, and I got so sick my lab partner had to do all the work. It was so gross! All the pigs were floating around in this big plastic bucket with this stinky grayish brown juice; my lab partner thought she was being funny by calling it pork stew, but I thought it looked more like vomit with pig babies bathing in it.

So now I'm a management major and I hate that, too. It just kind of seems pointless, I guess. I don't know why I even decided to attend college. My grades suck, I'm swinging from major to major, and the only thing I'm learning is the schedule for all the Stinger bus routes. In fact, right now I'm considering dropping out and becoming a Stinger bus driver. It's not a bad job, really, and I'm sure they're entitled to some benefits (like total control over the radio). I mean, one doesn't HAVE to graduate from Tech to be successful. For instance, take the man who created the Varsity. It didn't take a Tech degree to get him where he is today. PLEASE NOTE: If you plan on being away from a restroom for a long period of time (like thirty minutes), I wouldn't eat the chilli dogs if I were you. You just might break the toilet.

But anyway, what should I do? I haven't always been this flaky (have I?) and I try to set definite goals for myself and other stuff like that. So why can I not figure out what to do? Everyone else around me seems to know exactly what they're doing, while I'm still trying to get the hang of this whole e-mail business. Help!

Sincerely,
Majorly Undecided

Dear Undecided,

You seem to have a problem that is familiar to most college students. I have gone through it myself, and I spent a long time questioning why I attend Tech. I eventually decided that I would probably spend my life flipping burgers until I was so old that teeth became a major component of the burgers I made, and I had no more hair for the hairnet to hold. I voiced this opinion to a friend of mine and he gave me some really helpful advice, and I will repeat it here for you, in my words.

If there is something you really enjoy doing-be it writing, painting, aardvark racing, or whatever-you have to remember this thing you love so well when you are choosing a

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major. It is sincerely frightening to realize after you have been here for 2 years that you are totally unhappy with every major you have tried so far. I can say, from personal experience, that you should go with what you love. Yes, that may mean delaying graduation, maybe even starting all over at a different school, and, for sure having an extremely eclectic mix of classes on your transcript, but there is also another possibility; you could be amazingly happy with the decision you make.

I always hear people say that if you don't love what you do then there is no point in doing it-I wholeheartedly agree. What's the use in graduating in less time if you will spend your life doing something you don't like and wondering what could have happened if you had done what you really wanted? I say there is no use. Follow your heart, it helps. Take it from someone who knows.

-NAR lady

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Purple and Gold All-Stars

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The train doors open and the commuters quickly pile inside before the electric double doors slam shut. There are hundreds of us it seems. Business men perspiring profusely inside their dark, heat-holding suits and rigid collars; others in their work uniforms, short-sleeved button downs and starched work pants; and others dressed in the baggy jeans and untucked tee-shirt attire of inner-city costume; small clusters of suburbanite women clutching bulky bags labeled with the names of designer stores from the uptown mall; and teens just out of school taking up too much room with their over-stuffed book-bags and school instruments they play in the band. It takes only minutes for the train to be filled to beyond capacity, only a few seconds for every corner and aisle to be blocked with bodies, and when the doors finally fuse and the train shoves on with a jostling jerk, I find myself wedged between someone who reeks of menthol cigarettes and someone else who smells like hot, spoiling onions.

It's the peak of evening rush-hour in the city, and, second only to morning rush-hour, its the worse sixty minutes in the day. I, along with the countless many that push their way inside the tiny subway car, have spent the day dreading this very moment. Dreading the crowds, the unabating heat, the time wastefully ticking away as the train caterpillars down the rails. So many people and so many stops, and yet the train remains crowded and packed to the walls, with no more people getting off that gets on. Everyone who is standing grips the poles and ceiling rails for support, exposing unfresh armpits gone unprotected by deodorant which has expired hours ago, and those who are sitting try not to stare at the pair of buttocks rammed in front of their unfortunate faces. The air inside the train is old and moist; the same air another person breathes in is the same that someone else has breathed out seconds before. As the train lurches onward, balances are disrupted, causing people to bump into each other and step on each other's toes. This happens so frequently that no one excuses himself and at the same time, no one is offended by an apology left unsaid. In vain, we try to angle our faces away from our neighbor's to prevent the direct recycling of exhaled air, and we try to conserve space by shifting all of our weight to one hip. Those without watches steal glimpses from the wrists of others near them. Patiently, because this is how it always is, I and the rest of the passengers wait for our stops to come.

Then the most dreaded thing of the day happens: the train screeches to a halt in the middle of the tunnel, only a quarter of a mile from the next stop. It sits there like a motionless monster on the rail, with wheels locked and no longer rolling, not even inching, along. A waiting silence invades the entire car. Patiently, we wait for the train to once again thrust forward and knock us into each other. People glance at their watches and toes tap out restless rhythms on the floor. Too many seconds pass and patience swiftly evolves into its less compassionate sister as the train remains still, budgeless on the iron track. Exasperate sighs and mumbled complaints then arise from those around me as more seconds are wasted. When we finally come to the realization that the train

is not going to move soon, there is barely a pleasant face in sight. One by one, arms fall from the ceiling rails and consume the precious space by their owner's sides. The train has suddenly become a very much hated place.

The heat is what drives most of us mad. It shines our faces with sweat and makes even the sophisticated of businessmen pant like dogs and pull at their ties. The humidity coats our skin and frazzles hair, and the air is so saturated with it that evaporation ceases, leaving the sweat that is supposed to cool us down standing in drops on our noses and foreheads. Hoping to find some relief, I fan myself with my hand only succeed in making myself warmer. Someone standing next to me, an young asian man dressed in plain clothes and carrying a brief case, tries to look out the window to see what is going on. He can't see very much because the tunnel is dark.

"Any day now would be a good time to move!" an angry man to the left of me shout to no one but the air. He is a black man, middle-aged, wearing a green polo shirt on top of a pair of navy blue work pants and black Reeboks.

"It's just too hot for this today," a woman chimes in. She is short and dressed in a pinstripe suit, and her dark brown face is coated in a sheen of perspiration. "I'd wish they'd fix what's wrong after we get off the train."

"I know," another woman agrees, twirling her bleached blonde hair back into a bun which quickly comes loose.

Others speak up in agitation, adding heat to the air by griping.

"What's the hold up?"

"Can't we move?"

"It's too hot. I'd wish they'd turn on the air!"

"I think it's broken."

"What's broken? The train or the AC?"

"They could at least open the doors. I'm dying in here."

"This is pathetic!"

"What is the hold up!"

The car is soon filled with noise. From beneath the din of complaints, I can hear tinny sounds leaking from the earphones of a couple different walk-mans near me. Someone not too far away is listening to Sade, while a steady bass beat can be heard from another walk-man on my right. The conflicting sounds are enervating. Every few seconds someone sucks their teeth or sighs to express their extreme dissatisfaction with the day. Trying to tune out all the sounds around me, I long for a wall to lean

against and something cold to drink.

Finally, after voicing their impatience and discomfort, everyone quiets down and the frustrating waiting resumes. I study my neighbors. There's a few people dressed suits standing by the doors, a woman with a sleeping child propped on her hip, a sullen-faced kid with earphones locked over his ears, a gray-haired lady who seems nervous and a complete stranger to the rail system, a scattered number of blue collar workers crabby from a long, unfulfilling day on the job, and a stubly-faced construction worker with dusty boots; but mostly the faces around me are unsuperlative and without definition, as uncategorizable as mine. We all are tired and mildly claustrophobic now, and no one talks much.

"Want some gum?" a man next to me asks me. He's an older white man, heavy set and pink in the face, who doesn't seem to really mind the situation he's in. Even though the train isn't moving he is still gripping the ceiling rail with both hands. He sticks out among the rest of the passengers; while everyone else appears to be heading to some pinpointed destination, he looks as though any stop would easily do.

"No thanks," I reply, smiling politely, wondering as I turn away why the question seems so odd and out-of-place, almost hilarious with sheer wrongness.

He pulls out his pack of Big Red and offers the question to everyone else. "Gum, anyone?"

A few people chuckle, others shake their heads, and a couple mumble negative responses to the generous old man. One man accepts, though. The young asian man with the brief case takes a piece of gum and thanks the man.

"You're welcome. Thought someone might want some," the old man says, showing off an old set of dentures with a pleased grin. He's the one who smells like cigarettes, I think to myself.

"Are you getting off at the next stop?" the gum-recipient asks the old man.

"No, I still got five more stops to make on this train before I get to where I'm going."

"Oh," the young man says, running his fingers through a head-full of spiky black hair in one worrisome gesture. "My stop is the one coming up, and I'm going to be late if we don't move on soon."

"That's too bad. What you going to be late for?"

"I'm a teaching assistant at GIT. If I'm too late my class will automatically dismiss itself, and that won't look too good to the professor," the younger man gloomily says, unwrapping his stick of gum. "Wish we knew what the hold up was."

"Wouldn't make a difference if we did," the short woman in the pinstripe suit says. Her hair has been clipped into a conservative afro that frames her face into a neat oval.

"These trains always do this. You'd think that with how much token cost these days they would fix them up so they wouldn't break down every few feet."

"Guess we all need to invest in a car, huh?" a young Italian guy on her side comments with an anxious chuckle. He's tall and skinny with an immature mustache and black curly hair, and it's clear he's a bit hot in his rugby shirt and thick corduroys. "Hey, did you say you go to GIT?"

"Yeah, I'm a grad student," the gum-recipient replies, checking his watch.

"Oh yeah? You might know my dad. Every hear of a Dr. Spiro? He teaches chemistry up there."

"No, I've never heard of him. But then again, physics is what I'm in, not chemistry."

"Oh," the corduroy kid says. "I hear he's got a reputation as a hard professor so I thought you might know of him."

"I might now that I think of it. I don't know. But the name is sort of familiar. Spiro. Spiro. Yeah, I've heard of him. You go to the school?"

"No, I just graduated from State last year. My dad was kinda disappointed, too, with me not going to his school and all. But I can't help it if I'm a liberal arts kind of man, you know?" the corduroy kid comments, tapping the window impatiently. "I wonder how long this train is gonna stall."

The old man with the gum wants to hear more from this kid. "So what are you doing now? You working?"

"Trying to," he replies. "I just applied to Farber & Scotch Inc. and some other places today, trying to get my foot in the door. But I don't know if I have a chance working for F&S. Competition is mighty steep there."

The short lady in the suit suddenly pivots around as though her name has just been called. She shines a smile at the guy in the corduroys. "Did you just say Farber & Scotch?"

"Yeah."

"I work for them. In marketing," she says. "They're a good company."

"Really? How long--"

"About four years. The work is challenging and sometimes my schedule is inflexible, but I don't mind it so much. You trying to work there or something?"

"Yeah. In sales, as a matter of fact."

"Oh okay. Well that's good. Don't sweat it. If you got an all right resume and a couple of references you won't have anything to worry about. They're always letting new people in down in sales."

"That's the same the my friend Ida was telling me. She works at F&S, too, in marketing like you."

"Ida Combs? I know all about here." The woman then laughs. "The woman is truly a trip. She keeps the whole department in stitches. Funny as hell, and I can't believe her mouth hasn't gotten her fired yet. Did she tell you what happened in our boss's office last week?"

"No, what happened?"

"Well, last week the boss, Mr. Studmeyers, says to her--"

"Excuse me," the lady with the bleached hair interrupts. Even though she's toting a book-bag, she doesn't look very much like a student. "But did you say you know Ida Combs? C-o-m-b-s?"

"Yes," the woman and the young man reply in unisome.

"Wow, what a coincidence. Ida's my sister. My older sister." She pauses to look closer a the corduroy kid and then grins. "Wait a minute. I know you. You don't recognize me? We went to the same high school. I was a grade under you, but we were on student council together, remember?"

The corduroy kid gives her the once-over.

"Oh, yeah I remember you. It's Margarie, right?"

"Margret. And you're Doug, right?"

"Right. Oh yeah, now I remember you. Margret Combs. Wow, you look so different. You've gotten a whole lot taller since I saw you last. And your hair! Ida's the same way. Just can't accept the fact that she was born a brunette, not a blonde."

"Well, I've lost some weight so that may make me look taller. But you look the same."

"She looks just like her sister," the woman in the suit remarks. "You both talk the same. Same accent and everything. What high school did you attend?"

"West End High," the blonde woman says. "West End High?" a heavily bearded man with a dark complexion and fluffy black hair asks from behind me. He's been following the conversation like the rest of us in the vicinity, and I notice he has an accent, perhaps middle-eastern. "That's an excellent school. Five years ago I taught Arabic there. But then I moved to a private school when I got a better offer to work in an international studies department."

"Arabic? Where are you from?" the old man with the gum asks.

"I'm from Sudan, not far from the capital."

"I was in the performing arts magnet, so you probably didn't teach me," the blonde woman says.

"How is the school doing now? I heard rumors that it was closing down or consolidating with another school," the Arabic teacher says.

"I don't know, I really haven't kept in touch with what's happening there."

"I think it has consolidated," the corduroy kid says. "But I don't know what's going to happen to the campus. Maybe they'll renovate it and sell it."

"A private school is using the campus now," the construction worker with the dusty boots speaks up. His tanned face is wet with sweat, and frequently he removes his cap and fans the top of his balding head. "I helped renovate it last year, you know. There was a lot of controversy involved, but they city wanted to sell it to a private school. An internation school. The campus looks completely different. You guys probably wouldn't recognize it."

"Wow, things happen so fast," the corduroy kid states. "It seems like yesterday since I went there..."

"Damn! What is up with this train?" the man with the black Reeboks demands to himself and to the rest of us.

"Maybe we could all get out and push. All they'd have to do is ask and I'd be out there," the tardy teaching assistant seriously says.

"I'm sorry, miss. Would you like to have my seat?" a white man in shorts and T-shirt asks. He speaks a little loudly because he has earphones on; immediately, I locate who's listening to Sade.

"Yes, thank you," says the lady carrying the sleeping child, gratefully taking his seat.

"That's an adorable little boy you have. Sleeping so peacefully and not causing trouble. How old is he?" inquires the woman in the suit.

"He just turned two. But he's not mine. I'm his nanny," the woman says with a tired smile. She really doesn't look like his mother, now that I examine her and the child; she's latino and the child is white. "Oh, but he's no angel. He's just exhausted from crying for two hours, that's all. Look at his arm. See the band-aide? He just go his shots. You would've thought someone was beating him or something, the way he was carrying on."

"I'm the same way, though," the guy listening to Sade lisps loudly. "I can't stand needles."

"Who can? My wife is a nurse and is around that stuff all the time, and she's petrified of shots. Of getting them, not giving them, of course," a light-skinned black man sitting next to the woman says. He's sporting a pair of sunglasses, the silvery kind with mirrors for lenses. The people around him chuckle. "What's the little guy's name? He kinda looks like Opie."

The nanny giggles. "He's been blessed with an unusual name, that's for sure." She gently pats his back. "I will never understand why his parents named him Everet Studmeyers. It's not the most prettiest sounding thing, is it?"

"Everet Studmeyers? Poor kid," the man with the sunglasses says.

"Everet Studmeyers? That's my boss's name! Isn't that incredible?" the woman in the suit exclaims. "The boss' kid! And isn't he just the spitting image of his father?"

"Yup, he is. Has his father's temper, too," she sighs.

"This is unbelievable, really. Wait until I tell everybody that I say the boss' kid on the subway. No one will believe me. They all think his family doesn't go anywhere unless it's in a Lexus or a Lincoln," the woman says.

"Usually it's like that, but junior's parents took the cars and I had to take him up to Walshside clinic for his vaccinations. This is his first trip on the train."

"Walshide clinic? No kidding> That's where my wife works. She's an RN, and always makes her patients cry," the man with the sunglasses jokes. He glances at his Rolex. "And she's going to kill me!"

"Why?" asks the woman in the suit.

"We were supposed to go out to dinner before she starts her night shift at the hospital, if this train doesn't start moving we won't have enough time to eat before she's go to run off to work. She's not going to believe me when I tell her the train broke down."

"Just bring her some flowers and tell her sorry," the nanny suggests.

"That's not going to work. First of all, we haven't been out since...I can't even remember. The poor thing's been looking forward to our little date at the Santa Maria for a week. And on top of that, it's my birthday and she wanted to treat me to a good time. Me giving her flowers and apologizing wouldn't make much sense considering that I'm the birthday boy."

"Well, shoot, I guess we'll be late together because I have the late shift at the Santa Maria," the man listening to Sade laughs. "I could've been your waiter, couldn't I?"

"You still can if this train decides to move before the next year," the sunglass man mumbles, rechecking his watch anxiously. "What a way to spend a birthday!"

"Well, don't feel too bad," says the old man with the gum. "He offers him a little consoling smile. "It happens to be my birthday, too."

The two men laugh.

"Excuse me," an old, shot woman says to the nanny. From her accent and appearance, I can tell she's from South America or Mexico, and her eyes are full of uncertainty, as though she is lost. She points to the Towerheights station on the map that is on the wall. The station happens to be one of the least busiest station in the city; it rests at the end of the westbound rail where hardly anyone goes. "Do you know how get here?"

The nanny tries to direct her where to go, but the woman's English is poor and she is unable to understand the younger woman. The nanny tries to break it down in Spanish, but unfortunately, she doesn't know the language well enough to convey good instructions. Both the woman in the suit and the sunglass man try to help as well, but the woman doesn't understand them and simply nods with a blank expression on her face. She's tired and beyond frustrated, and more than prepared to give up the search. The sunglass man gives up his seat to her and she sits down heavily, smiling wearily but appreciably. The Sade man then tries his hand at showing her the way. He, too, doesn't have much luck in getting through to her.

"Hey, where is she trying to get to?" the black man with the black Reeboks asks them.

"Towerheights," they all say together.

"That's where I'm heading. Tell her she can follow me, if she wants."

When the woman realizes that she has someone to follow, relief relaxes her face. Everyone else is relieved, too. There isn't anyone there who couldn't identify with being lost in a big foreign place where it seems not a soul speaks your language or knows your name. With a soft, diffident voice she thanks the man.

"No problem at all," he says. "Just wish the train would move, that's all."

Just then, the train lurches forward with an abruptness that startles us and buckles our knees. In one, swift synchronized motion, arms fly up and hands take hold of poles and ceiling rails. We hold our breaths, pessimistically waiting for the train to stop and regain its stationary position on the track. But it doesn't stop. Slowly but steadily the train eases its way through the tunnel, with wheels turning freely and unhindered. Exclamation of joy erupt, and there's a ripple of light applause. Inevitably, the commotion wakes the little boy that had been napping peacefully on the nanny's lap, and he starts crying until gets purple in the face. A few people laugh at him, including the nanny.

After a few words of apology from the train operator, we finally arrive at the midtown

station. As soon as the doors spring open, a wave of cool clean air sweeps us out of the stuffy, unventilated car; we drink the new air into our lungs and wipe our sweat-polished faces dry as we quickly fall out on the platform. No one seems to mind waiting for the next train. I am amazed to hear no complaints.

I take a seat on a bench and watch the crowd fan out along the length of the platform as the broken train rolls out of the station. A few feet away from me the corduroy kid is busy talking to the bleached-blond. They are flirting, it seems, and I wonder if their phone numbers will be exchanged before the hour is up. I spot the young asian guy with the brief case hurrying toward the escalators, his eyes on his watch, his attention directed on his class and the lateness of the hour. He runs passed the old man with the gum, who is engaged in a political dialogue with the Arabic teacher. Despite the rules against smoking inside the station, both are puffing away on cigarettes, the smelly menthol kind. Near them the woman in the suit is trying to pacify the nanny's fussy charge with peppermint candy from her purse; as evident, from the child's continuous wailing, her efforts are failing. The construction worker and the man with the Reeboks are trying to explain the complicated rail system to the Mexican woman, and it's apparent on her face that she's beginning to understand the directions now. Against the wall, the sunglass man is slumped over a pay-phone, undoubtedly assuring his waiting wife that he'd be home soon.

And as I sit there watching them, I think about the last forty-five minutes on the train. Something had been quite odd about that usually dull and much dreaded trip. Had it been the fact that the train had stopped? No, I didn't think so; the train breaking down had been more annoying than odd. So what had it been? There had been nothing unusual about the crowds, and nothing spectacular about the train itself. Basically, everything had been the same as if always was on the train at this hour, except for the break-down, which hadn't been too surprising. So what had made this particular trip on the train any different from the hundreds I had taken before? I sat on the bench, reflecting.

Slowly it dawns on me. When I realize it I wonder if I'm the only person who notices what now seems so obvious that it's impossible to overlook. Are all the people standing before me connected together, linked by invisible chains? No, I tell myself, that can't be. It's mere coincidence. But it can not be denied everyone around me are associated strangers. In a few minutes, perfect strangers had stopped being busy and tied-up with dozens of distractions, had paused to look over their shoulder or drop a glance at their neighbor, and in the spanse of time it took for the train to get going again, something powerful had transpired. The strangers had lost their strangeness, their foreign. Small, insignificant bonds are what join them together, transforming these strangers into something more than what they had been and what they had considered themselves to be. The truth is--it occurs to me as I wait patiently for the next train--that everyone, however thinly or unapparently, is tied to everyone else by invisible strings that are sometimes short and sometimes long, but always present. And it is these ties that keep us all from being real strangers. No matter where we are or who we are, we are all associates. Finding our links is an easy thing; getting past our differences is where the

real challenge lies.

But are people really linked together by something as small as "strings"? I wonder. Or do those strings simply constitute a bigger, much more significant form? Perhaps society is a giant web which joins its inhabitants together and unites them with many loose but semi-durable bonds. Yes, perhaps that is what it is.

And then I wonder if I too exist in the web. Maybe I'm not, or if I am, maybe I sit on the very edge of it where the strings run few and thin. Am I alone in this world? I ponder. If I am in this big, inclusive humanity web was it even possible to be alone? I had spent my life in an isolated room, forever in a blurry background. Would I always be on the outside looking in?

As I consider this, someone sits down next to me on the bench. It's a young guy: the sullen-faced boy with the mega-earphones locked over his ears that I had seen on the train. He looks like he's in high school. Probably suffering from the first pangs of senioritis, I think to myself as I recall the not-so-distant days of the twelfth grade. Staring off out at the distance, he bops his head to the mellow beat of the music blaring through the headphones. It's so loud I can I can make out what it is he's listening to. And when I recognize the voice of the singer, I almost burst out laughing, but I don't want to risk looking crazy so I just smile.

It's Sade.

And then he looks over at me. His lips pull up into a conspiratorial smile.

"Small world, huh?" he says simply. And he points at our feet.

For a moment I'm puzzled, but then I look down. When I see it, I smile again. Yes, I agree with myself. The train ride home was quite unusual today.

Despite being what I considered an extremely unique pair of sneakers, we're wearing the exact same shoes. Purple and gold All-Stars.

from kis

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A Georgia Tech Publication.

The Facts About Cloning.

by Joshua Marinacci

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On February 23, 1997, a group in Scotland, headed by Dr. Ian Wilmut, created the first clone of a large mammal, a sheep named Dolly. In the weeks following, a controversy sprung up around them and the rest of the cloning research community because, for the first time in science history, there is reason to believe that human cloning will not only be possible, but will be possible within the next ten years. This fear of human cloning and its repercussions have caused wild speculation, demonization, and vast public misconception. Many reporters have spurred these fears by telling scenarios of creating the ultimate soldier and cloning people to create organ farms. These stories are, for the most part, completely unrealistic and do not address the real concerns of cloning or explain the real benefits.

Dolly was actually born last July but was not announced until recently because the researchers wanted to study her health and prepare for the announcement. She is not the first clone, nor even the first clone of a mammal. In the mid-eighties cows had been cloned from cow embryos. But Dolly is the first clone of an adult mammal. She was created by taking cells from the udder of an adult sheep and then using the DNA of one of these cells to replace the nucleus of a fertilized sheep egg. This created a sheep embryo that is genetically identical to the adult sheep. The new embryo was placed in a surrogate mother sheep and a few months later, Dolly was born. Before Dolly and the cows, several clones had been made of smaller mammals and other lower animals. Genetically identical rats have been used in research for years and clones of tadpoles date back to the fifties. Until Dolly though, many scientists believed it would be impossible to ever clone an adult human. It now appears that they were wrong and, barring a few technical issues, human clones will be possible by the turn of the century.

Cloning is a very valuable technology but also a very misunderstood one. Unlike what was seen in the motion picture Jurassic Park, it is not likely that we will be able to clone dinosaurs. We have no dinosaur DNA from which to make these clones. Most fossils contain less than 10% actual bone, and virtually all of the cells have decayed beyond usefulness. With a lot of luck, it may be possible to find some valid strings of DNA, but many holes in the DNA would have to be filled in (as was done in the book of Jurassic Park). For similar reasons, cloning dead people will only be possible if the body is fresh or has been preserved extremely well. Frozen corpses like the woolly mammoth found a few years ago might be possible candidates. Of course a suitable host mother would have to be found.

One of the most important uses of cloning technology is the ability to recreate a valuable animal. The researchers who created Dolly were working on a solution to a eugenics problem. Eugenics is when the DNA of a cow or sheep is modified so that the animal produces human chemicals and enzymes in its milk. These chemicals can then be used to create medicine for babies that can't breast feed, among other uses.

Modifying the DNA of a sheep is a very costly process and does not have a high success rate. With cloning, however, once the first sheep is created, it can be cloned until enough animals are available to replenish the herd through normal reproduction.

A common concern about human cloning is that the clones would be considered sub-humans or would be different than regular people. This scenario is completely false. The act of a person creating a clone is the same as the act of a person having a child except that the child would have one hundred percent of the DNA from the parent instead of fifty percent. The kid would still be born, still have to grow up for 20 years, and still need college tuition. In the United States all clones would be treated the same as other humans regardless of their background; be they lab clones, adopted children from foreign countries, the child of a racially intermixed family, the children of lesbian parents, or the artificially inseminated children of Nobel prize winners. It is a human child just the same.

The psychology of clones might be different than normal people, even if biologically they are the same. If an adult human has a clone made, then that person essentially has a twin brother or sister, except at a different age. It is currently unknown what kind of psychological problems the person would have but most likely they would not be too different from the standard parent-child relationship or a sibling-sibling relationship. There are plenty of people who look strangely similar to their father or have a twin sister. These people are relatively normal and consider themselves to be completely unique. If a person made a clone child they might try to create a nurturing environment similar to their own, but this would not be different from any other overbearing parent trying to make their offspring follow in their footsteps. A clone would not have any psychological problems that aren't already present in normal sibling or parental relationships. These would simply be special cases. Of course any parent that really wanted to create a clone of themselves might have their own psychological problems that would influence the child anyway, regardless of the child's origin.

Scientifically, an original and a clone would be similar but not completely identical. Their DNA would be almost the same, so close in fact, that only a molecular biologist would be able to detect the difference. This might cause a problem if one person commits a crime and DNA evidence is used to arrest the clone. The retina and fingerprints, physical traits which are more commonly used for identification than DNA testing, are entirely chemical in nature and do not depend on DNA. This means that two clones would have different retinal patterns and fingerprints.

As an interesting side note, many people wonder what the relationship of an original and its clone would be called (this is an important psychological issue). Would a clone call the original its mother or father? Miss Manners suggests "Most honored sir or madame." because "One should always respect one's ancestors, regardless of what they did to bring one into the world."

Many people are concerned about a country making the ultimate soldier or the ultimate army. Creating a super soldier would require breeding or genetic engineering. Genetic engineering is an entirely different issue from cloning and will not be discussed here.

Making the ultimate soldier could be done through breeding today. Americans wouldn't do it (we hate arranged marriages) but a strong enough leader in another country could force his people to do it. Cloning simply makes this more reliable because once you create the perfect soldier you could replicate it to create an army. Making the ultimate army could be done today through drafting and choosing the most desirable specimens. Cloning makes this more efficient since you have a better pool of applicants. But this can easily be done without cloning already in countries with dictatorships. Your soldiers would still be regular people and genetics only goes so far towards making someone predestined for military life. Brainwashing, indoctrination, and training would still be required. Imagine a military school where students come in at age 3 and stay until 18. Such a school would have about the same effect. Sure, you could breed stronger soldiers but physical strength is losing importance in modern warfare.

It is also important for a military to be diverse. There are many jobs to fill requiring many different skills. An army with a more diverse population would be better because it would have the advantage of many different ideas and approaches to any given problem. In the long run this will win over an army of mindless automatons.

Another big concern about cloning is the possibility of creating slave labor forces. However, slave labor is not economical in most parts of the world. Even President Thomas Jefferson saw that slavery was on the way out, to be replaced by efficient machines that can run twenty four hours a day, year round. And they can also be turned off when not needed. Most crops can't be grown year round so the slaves had nothing to do for part of the year but still had to be housed and fed. Then during the harvest season they couldn't work as many hours in a day as a machine could. If cotton (a crop that could be grown close to year round) hadn't come along, slavery would have been gone by the early 1800's. In the modern world slavery simply isn't practical. In first wave (agricultural) economies, usually in areas with little or no industry, slavery is still somewhat economical, but this is becoming less so. This is why we still see child labor in some countries. A clone would be more efficient than a twelve year old but not more efficient than a factory robot. As second and third wave economies take over we will see human slavery end and we should do everything we can to encourage this.

To fit into a third wave (information) economy slaves could be used for intellectual labor rather than manual labor. Though they might be considered as less than human because they are clones, they would still have to be educated, housed, and fed. This would not really be any different than normal people living in an oppressive country, which still goes on today. This is why we have embargos on certain countries and why Amnesty International still has a lot to complain about. Cloning will not really change this situation at all. Subjugated people are subjugated people, regardless of how they were born.

One of the few new issues brought up by cloning is the idea of DNA being intellectual property. Since a clone can be made from theoretically any cell on the human body, an unscrupulous person could steal a lock of hair and create a clone from on it. This could even create a black market for celebrity babies. Under US law, at least, this would most likely be considered illegal due to legal precedents. Recently a couple planned to have

a baby via artificial insemination. Unfortunately, after the sperm sample had been taken but before the legal waivers had been signed, the man died in a plane crash. The judge ruled that since the man had not signed the waivers, he had not given the property rights of his DNA to his wife and she could not get the operation performed. Based on this precedent it would be illegal to take someone's DNA without their permission. This also brings up issues of ancestral DNA. Children have the right to say whether or not an ancestor may be exhumed. So do they have the right to say whether an ancestor may be cloned (assuming a valid DNA sample can be found)? Ancestor rights is especially interesting in the case of the Cheddar Man. The Cheddar Man is the body of a man dating to about 8,000 years ago that was found in the Cheddar Valley in Great Britain. The DNA of the Cheddar Man was linked to a history teacher living in the area. Would the history professor have the cloning rights to the Cheddar Man?

One of the most disturbing uses for cloning is the idea of creating clones so that their bodies can be used for organ transplants. This is not entirely a new issue since recently a family had a second child to save the life of their first child. The first child needed a bone marrow transplant but the child had a rare blood type. Rather than wait for a donor, the parents decided to have a second child which would have a 25% chance of having the same blood type. The gamble paid off and both children are living happily. The concern is that the child was had exclusively to save the life of another. The parents said that they wanted to have another child anyway, but this still raises some ethical delimmias.

Even more disturbing is the prospect of brain dead humans being raised purely for organ transplants. This is related to the abortion and euthanasia issues. Recently a couple had a child with a deformed brain, and it could not live without lifesupport. They had expected the child to die within two weeks of birth but the child had not died by five weeks so the parents decided to take the baby off life support so that it could give it's heart and other organs to save the lives of other babies. Most people agree that this was an ethically sound decision. This baby was an anomaly so the question is whether it is ethical to actually plan children for organ donation. What if women who planned to have an abortion were to instead undergo an operation that would kill the brain of the embryo so that it was born braindead? It could then grow on lifesupport until it's organs were needed.

There are some religious issues involved with cloning. Many people feel that cloning takes away from God's power to control the random makeup of the child at conception. The Catholic Church believes that cloning violates the "natural moral law", a law which also prohibits birth control and abortion. The protestant view tends to be that improving upon nature is okay for most things and that cloning can be useful but that cloning humans is going to far because it puts too much power into the hands of a few humans. All theologians say that a clone would still be a unique individual and would therefore have its own soul. A clone would not be some kind of a ressurection or a way to achieve immortality (or at least no more than having regular children is achieving immortality).

The value of cloning to society is very great. In addition to eugenics, cloning could be

used to let barren parents or a lesbian couple have children. Most people do not want clones made of themselves because they feel that one of them is enough. Most people prefer to have children through normal procreation. Though cloning does make some human rights violations more efficient, these are merely symptoms of other existing problems, and should not be used as an excuse to ban cloning. For many people it is a useful and important technology. The religious and moral issues are the same as the abortion and euthanasia issues, and are not likely to be resolved any time soon, cloning or not. Finally, cloning is extremely expensive and unreliable (it took 1800 failed embryos to create just one success). Dolly will be only one of a few cloned sheep. After the stocks are built up, future Dolly's will be made using the cheaper, "old fashioned way".

"The world after cloning", US News & World Report. March 10, 1997. pg 59.

"Human cloning? Don't just say no", US News & World Report, March 10, 1997. pg 64.

"Scientist Reports First Cloning Ever of Adult Mammal", The New York Times, February 23, 1997. <http://search.nytimes.com/web/docsroot/comment/clone-sci.html>

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Cloning Jesus

Tyler Best

Many people are convinced that Jesus Christ was a relatively swell guy. Apparently the lessons he conveyed through both rhetoric and deed are, at the very least, popular and lasting. While the bad news is that Jesus's terrestrial adventure was a local and episodic event that spanned less than a complete lifetime, the good news is that his return is widely anticipated; and though his reservations have not been released to the public, it is never too early to prepare. One popular sentiment is that a tally of all the "good" and "bad" conduct on this third rock from the sun would reveal that the world is in moral decline. Throw in technology's insidious potential and we are primed for catastrophe, hence the times are ripe for a second dose of Jesus. Suppose that Jesus Christ returned tomorrow, how ought we to receive him? Surely he would be overwhelmed with attention once discovered (through some divine fishing lesson or the like). It seems that Jesus was a substantial unifying force among people, a force that has remained long after his disappearing act (which pales in comparison to the reappearing trick). In recognition of technology's ability and pace, I propose that if and when Jesus Christ returns to earth we clone him for the masses.

Does God not deserve more than one public relations guy? If one son is good then surely we can expect two to be better. Unlike God, Jesus can only speak to so many people at a time. The natural solution is to increase the number of speakers. Let's face it, the Trinity is obsolete when science can put a Jesus on every porch -- the new American dream. It's time to retire God's fishing pole for Him and let science create multiple lures. It's time to clone Jesus.

Depeche Mode was on to something with their song "your own personal Jesus." Social constructs are so possessive anyway, why ought we share the Savior? My plan is only contingent upon his return. In light of the approaching new millennium there's bound to be a number of bizarre events on the horizon and Jesus turning up wouldn't come as too great a surprise.

Upon Christ's arrival I intend to patent his DNA (in remembrance of him, if you will). Seeing as how his blood is readily available at periodic religious services, this may be as easy as analyzing some cheap wine. After the legal details are fortified, one Federally Expressed thermos-o-Jesus genes to the lab will yield several Jesus beta models. Units A and B will undergo various stability tests while Unit C is delivered to Consumer Reports for evaluation. Pending the results on the engineering units, Jesus will be available to the public a mere 6 months after his return.

With identical clones obtainable, there is naturally the potential for... well, "special" clones. Accordingly, there will be several custom Jesus models in the lineup. For those who have attention difficulties with soft spoken individuals there is the Especially

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Assertive Jesus, EAJ. To eliminate that roaming tendency Jesus exhibits there is Stay Put Jesus, SPJ. For those tedious morning traffic inconveniences we can provide Carpool Buddy Jesus, CBJ, enabling one to use the HOV lane (bonus: who needs a plastic fish on their trunk lid when they can have Jesus in the flesh and in the passenger seat). Finally, Generation X can relate with Special Edition Extreme Jesus, SEJ, complete with a pair of in-line skates and a case of Mountain Dew.

Regardless of whether the world is worse off than another time, Jesi (the plural) can no doubt make it better. For the meantime, imagine Jesus meandering about your garden, giving the blessing at your next meal, or serving hors d'oeuvres at your dinner parties. Not to mention, for people with a particularly guilty conscious (warranted or not), Jesus is superior to every indulgence on the market. And what to do if things don't work out? Simply set your Jesus free, he will undoubtedly wander off and spread goodness and you will become a philanthropist of the grandest sort (note: Stay Put Jesus requires termination). While the rest of the population scampers around with their short term materialistic concerns, you can invest in your eternal future. Order now and there will come a day when God-selling toadies inquire as to whether you know Jesus and you can reply, "as a matter of fact, I own him."

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A Letter to Bill

April 28, 1997

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Dear Bill,

What have you been up to lately? Not much, I imagine. I asked your parents how you were doing. Your dad just looked at the table, while your mother told me your troubles and made your excuses.

When are you going to grow up Billy?. The world is leaving you behind. Wake up and start living now or you'll be playing catch-up for the rest of your life.

You were my best friend. What happened? So awkward coming home from college... Suddenly I was an outsider, trying too hard to get back in. At first, I felt like you moved on without me, but you hadn't moved, not forward anyway. Every time I see you now its the same... half-assed attempts in community college, always about to make a change, there's always a plan. I tell you what I've been up to, and you tell me stories. I wish you would stop telling me what you think I want to hear. You've been wrong every time. I don't want you to be like me. What I want to hear is honesty and the conviction to be yourself, and I refuse to believe that drugs and part-time jobs are you.

I used to enjoy conversations with you. You had insightful thoughts about life, love, religion,... Well, now you can keep your philosophies about life, your thoughts, theories, and such. You claim to be experiencing life, but you hide in smoke filled rooms doing drugs, discussing earth-shattering ideas that dissolve as the high wears off. Your ideas have no more substance than the smoke that inspires them.

I see you as a child pretending to be an adult, a lost little boy pretending not to care, but you're afraid because you have no dreams to fulfill. The view of the world must be so narrow through your bloodshot eyes. There are infinite possibilities, yet all you can see are the dead ends. You want to see changes in the world, but your life hasn't changed since high school. Take responsibility for your situation and make changes. The money you claim to need? You already spent it ten times over on drugs you claim not to need.

What's your reason for living? Is it love, friendship, success,...? Can the people you spend your time with give you that? They offer comfort only in that they are lost like you. You have no god. You have no goals. You have no dreams. You build nothing, create nothing, do nothing. Each day brings you closer to nothing. No wonder you need drugs. Your only source of pride is how much you smoked, swallowed, and snorted the night before.

I'm not saying your life is easy or comfortable, but at the end of the day, how has your

suffering advanced you? You're not experimenting with life. You're experimenting with how to avoid it. Quit waiting for some purpose to fall into your lap. Try picking a purpose, and if it doesn't suit you,... pick another. That is experimenting with life. It takes sacrifices to get what you want, but sacrifice without goals will go unrewarded.

That nerdy little kid I knew years ago had dreams. How did he lose them?

Seriously,
Alec

[Alec McGillivray](#)

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